

Mississippi Rural Health Association  
“Keep it Local – A Rational Approach to Keeping Health Care Local”  
Tuesday, April 24, 2001  
12:30 p.m.  
Jackson Medical Mall – Auditorium

(Message: 10-15 minutes; opportunities to keep Mississippi’s health care local and improving the quality of life)

## **Opening**

- Good Afternoon
- (Mrs. Ora Rawls, Pres. of the Rural Health Association, will introduce you.)
- (Story)

## **Main Points**

1. Opportunities
  - a. Mississippians now, more than ever, have many opportunities from which to choose.
  - b. Better opportunities in:
    - i. Education
    - ii. Economic Development
    - iii. Health Care
    - iv. Public Safety
  - c. Education and economic development go hand in hand.
  - d. Our state must have a good quality of life to attract more businesses and industries.
    - i. Our health care options are a key to a good quality of life

- ii. Safe schools, homes and communities are an important factor also.
- iii. We are investing in good jobs for our people
  - 1. Nissan
    - a. Is only the beginning.
    - b. The AMI gave Mississippi the competitive advantage.
  - 2. Supplier opportunities
    - a. Creating thousands of spin-off jobs for Mississippians
    - b. Potential for 26,000 for all of Mississippi.
- e. We are giving our people the opportunity for an even **better** Quality of Life
- f. Mississippi must invest.
  - i. The key is prioritizing and investing our money in the right places.
    - 1. Education
    - 2. Economic development
    - 3. Health Care
    - 4. Public Safety
- g. Investing in Health care.

## 2. Rural Health Care Loan Fund

- a. We have talked many times about putting Mississippi in competitive positioning in economic development, which creates

better opportunities for people across our state.

- b. But are we competitive in Mississippi when it comes to providing health care options and access to healthcare?
- c. Mississippi is leading the nation in some aspects of healthcare, but we are facing one health care crisis that is plaguing our state.
- d. Primary care providers are becoming more and more scarce, particularly in some rural areas of Mississippi.
- e. People in every county – in every area - of our state deserve to have access to life-saving, life-enhancing services.
- f. We have made progress in bringing better health care access opportunities to people in all areas of our state.
- g. We have enacted a medical scholarship program that helps us attract physicians to our state's areas of critical needs.
  - i. More qualified physician working to improve the health care needs in rural communities.
- h. We have enrolled more of our children in the Children's Health Insurance Program.
  - i. Over 29,000 children are now enrolled in this program.

- ii. More children in Mississippi gaining access to quality health care.
    - iii. More healthy children.
  - i. And we now have licensed Nurse Practitioners and Physicians Assistants, whose presence in our state offers increased access to medical care.
    - i. More qualified professionals.
  - j. I can promise you that Mississippians have our commitment to find even more solutions that work to enhance their lives.
    - i. We are constantly looking for innovative ways to meet the needs of all Mississippians.
  - k. The Enterprise Corporation of the Delta and Mississippi Access for Rural Care are making great strides to solutions that meet our people's health care needs.
  - l. With the establishment of the Rural Health Care Loan Fund, community health centers, rural clinics, hospitals, physicians, pharmacists and dentists in medically underserved areas of Mississippi can get financing to enhance and increase their practices to better serve the people in the rural areas of our state.
  - m. That means more Mississippians with better access to good health care options.

- n. That means more Mississippians getting the medical attention they need.
- o. And that means healthier Mississippians with better qualities of life.
- p. Participation in this program is vital to our efforts to meet the needs of the people in the rural areas of our state.
- q. Sound, solid healthcare is vital to a good quality of life for the people of Mississippi.
- r. This program is helping us develop stronger and better Mississippians, which creates a stronger and better Mississippi.

### 3. Medicaid Upper Payment Limits

- a. Congress' Balanced Budget Act of 1997 contained cuts that hit Mississippi hard and had a negative impact on rural healthcare in our state.
- b. Over a 5-year period, we lost almost a billion dollars of badly needed funding.
- c. This is revenue our hospitals need to survive.
- d. The Mississippi Hospital Association identified a federal program that will result in additional revenue for hospitals that provide healthcare services to our state's less fortunate citizens.

- e. The Medicare Upper Payment Limits Program dramatically increases the funding necessary to provide hospital care for our state's poor and indigent patients.
- f. This funding will help keep our hospitals open.
- g. The funding will help every Mississippian.
- h. After passage by the Mississippi Legislature, and federal approval by the Health Care Financing Administration, we anticipate this program will pump an additional \$90 to \$120 million into our state's health care economy.
- i. It will help Mississippi hospitals work with the massive budget cuts implemented by Congress.
- j. The program depends on a hospital fee to operate, so it has no effect on the state's general fund.

## **Closing**

- Mississippi is headed forward.
- It takes everyone working together to move our state forward – locally and statewide.
- We are not going to turn back the clocks and disrupt our progress.

- We want more great opportunities for the people of Mississippi.
- We want our children to have the opportunity to live, work and raise their families here.
- Everyone plays a role in our success.
- Working together we can and will make it happen.
- The people of Mississippi deserve that commitment.
- The children of Mississippi deserve that commitment.
- Our future depends on everyone working as a team in Mississippi.
- Making plans now for an even better Mississippi will ensure that future generations continue to succeed in our state.